Pulse

New England Deaconess Hospital
Boston, Massachusetts

JULY 1966

MEDICARE

COMPUTER GETS TOP BILLING

Medicare began July 1 and to the general observer the reaction was not dramatic. Great hordes of golden agers did not clamor to be admitted. In fact, our admissions were average for the long weekend — a total of 29 on July 1 with only 10 over 65 years of age. The visible routine went smoothly, but the normality was a result of advance behind-the-scene preparation.

One of the largest difficulties to overcome was the paper work necessary to fulfill the government's complicated billing requirements. It may sound dull, but it is quite a story.

Both Part A and Part B of Medicare demand procedures involving extensive calculation. Aside from room and board — all laboratory, pharmacy, radiology, anesthesia, operating room and inhalation therapy fees as well as the charges for medical, surgical and central supplies must be determined and itemized for Part A alone. Departments which include the professional service of a physician must separate their charges between Part A and Part B. A patient may never see the doctors who head these departments, like Pathology or Radiology, but Medicare asks that the percentage of the charge which represents the professional component for their personal service be billed under Part B, as is the attending physician's fee.

For example, Medicare Part A will pay 88% of the total charge for the laboratory. The other 12% is the doctor's professional component, his percentage of the charge. If the patient has Part B of Medicare, it will cover 80% of the doctor's professional component, and if the patient has Medex (Blue Cross' Medicare extension program) it will pick up the remaining 20%. If the patient has neither Part B or Medex, he will be responsible for the professional fee himself.

The Hospital will take care of the Medicare Part B billing for its departmental physicians. The Part B form requires an identification of the exact test or procedures performed. Although our patient bills are very complete, they do not give a precise description of the test performed, on the basis that there are times when it might be unwise. To solve this dilemma, the systems department has developed a code which appears as an arbitrary number on the patient's bill, but which, when de-coded, will explain the test for Part B Medicare billing.

All systems go for Medicare. Mr. Richard E. Lee, Assistant Executive Director and Controller, poses at the computer console while Mr. Albert E. Smith, IBM Supervisor, and Mr. Dean Annis, Assistant Controller stand by.

Imagine having to figure it all out. How much Part A or B of Medicare would pay, how much private insurance should pay and how much the patient pays. Tempers would be short, the time long and the mistakes many. This is why the IBM 1440 computer has been given the job of top Medicare billing, and this is why it gets top news billing this month.

SYSTEMS DESERVES CREDIT

Of course, we are being unfair. A computer cannot do anything, but what it is told, and in all honesty the Systems Division of Administration deserves the credit. Under the direction of Mr. Richard E. Lee, Assistant Executive Director and Controller, — Mrs. Priscilla Tinkham, Systems Analyst and Mr. Frank Wright, Computer Programmer, have developed a computer based system to handle the Medicare billing. Priscilla has whizzed around as if jet propelled coordinating the activities of Mr. William Branson in Patient Service, Mr. Wayne Robbins in Data Processing and Mr. Dean Annis, the Assistant Controller, in order to develop a comprehensive system. Priscilla had to continually work with Blue Cross and the Social Security Administration, and many of their necessary answers came at the last minute making programming difficult.

Frank Wright's job of translating every detail into computer language was often delayed. Nearing the deadline time he worked for 32 hours straight. Frank was graduated from Bowdoin College as a philosophy major in 1961. He came to Deaconess as a part-time employee in February, 1966 and attended Boston University Law School at the same time. This summer he is with us full-time. "Everything depended on Frank and it

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PROFILE

Who came to Boston from Good Thunder, Minnesota in 1930 with a Bachelor of Arts in Chemistry after one year's experience as a teacher? What young girl completed a laboratory training course at Ancker Hospital in St. Paul and then traveled east? Luckily for Deaconess, it was Mrs. Clare F. Shruhan, who is now the Head Technologist of our Clinical Laboratory and a Teaching Supervisor at the Northeastern University and the New England Deaconess - New England Baptist School of Medical Technology.

She came to Boston because of the demand for trained medical technologists and worked for several years both before and after her marriage to John Shruhan, a lawyer. They had two children, and she remained at home until the younger was in school. In 1951 she joined the chemistry laboratory at Deaconess but left to add a son to the family. She returned in '54 and has been an integral part of the laboratory growth and development ever since.

Mrs. Clare F. Shruhan, Teaching Supervisor and Head Technologist, helps one of the medical technology students.

About six years ago, Mrs. Shruhan's work evolved into her present position, which has many facets for many people. She is a liaison between Dr. Bradley E. Copeland, Clinical Pathologist, and the laboratory staff. Her job includes working with the laboratory supervisors to coordinate the overall effort of the clinical laboratory as well as planning student training in the School of Medical Technology. She may start her morning by trying out a new piece of equipment only to be asked to help someone with a difficult laboratory procedure. Before the day finishes she may have lectured to a medical technology class and solved the weekend staffing problem.

Dr. Copeland writes, "An expert at personnel guidance, Mrs. Shruhan unravels difficult problems with a consideration for individual dignity always keeping in mind the responsibility of the laboratory to the patient. Bringing out the best in everyone can be said to be her goal. She has been particularly instrumental in organizing and teaching personnel to provide twenty-four hour coverage in the labs including weekends and holidays. This more efficient utilization of facilities means a shorter hospital stay for many patients."

The Shruhans live near Brigham Circle in Roxbury, and Mrs. Shruhan enjoys the walk to work. The walk gives her time to change from the wife, mother and grandmother she is at home to the efficient supervisor she is here. Her two grandsons are the children of her elder daughter, Mrs. Mercedes Warren of Medfield. Her other daughter, Miss Clare F. Shruhan, is at George Washington University working on her master's degree in psychology, and her son, Michael, is a freshman at Catholic Memorial High School.

WE'RE PROUD OF

At the Medical Technologists' graduation are: Dr. William A. Meissner, Pathologist-in-Chief (left); Mr. R.D. Lowry, Executive Director; Miss Jeanne J. Smith and Mrs. Elizabeth R. Kitson, graduates; and Dr. Bradley E. Copeland, Clinical Pathologist.

The second graduating class of the Northeastern University and New England Deaconess Hospital - New England Baptist Hospital School of Medical Technology received their diplomas on June 29 at an evening ceremony at New England Baptist Hospital. A student in the five-year program alternates periods of internship in the hospital laboratory with periods of academic training at Northeastern University. There were five graduates, two of whom interned at Deaconess — Mrs. Elizabeth R. Kitson and Miss Jeanne J. Smith. They will earn the title M.T. (ASCP), Medical Technologist registered with the American Society of Clinical Pathologists, after passing the examination given by the Board of Registry of Medical Technologists.

SCHOOL OF MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY RECEIVES AWARDS

At the meeting of the American Society of Medical Technologists, which was held in Los Angeles the week of June 19, several Deaconess people received awards. In the category of institutional exhibits the School's brochure won first prize. Mrs. Clare F. Shruhan, Teaching Supervisor at the School, aided in its preparation.

Mrs. Harriet H. Bailey was awarded the Warner-Chilcott Scholarship in Medical Technology for advanced study. Mrs. Bailey is an instructor in the Medical Technology program and a Technologist in our Chemistry Laboratory.

New Department Head

"Feels good to back a winning team," says Mr. Joseph E. Doherty, our new executive housekeeper. And although he could be talking about the housekeeping department, he is referring to the softball team. He heads one and roots for the other.

Mr. Doherty played softball with Newton-Wellesley Hospital in the late 50's when he was their executive housekeeper, and he helped start St. Elizabeth Hospital's softball team in 1966 when he was the executive housekeeper there.

Mr. Doherty started in the housekeeping business 12 years ago at Massachusetts General Hospital as a part-time linen attendant while he was going to school. He was graduated from Newman Preparatory and later attended Boston University. During the Korean War he joined the Navy, spending over two years at the Naval Station at Annapolis, and one

MR. JOSEPH E. DOHERTY

and a half years aboard the *USS* Lake Champlain and the *USS* Wasp. After the war he returned to Massachusetts General for four years, as a housekeeping supervisor, a position directly responsible to the department head. Between his three years at Newton-Wellesley and his stay at St. Elizabeth's, he started a cleaning contract business, the Mass. Maintenance Corporation, which is still active in the industrial field today.

Mr. Doherty is a member of the Board of Directors of the Institute of Sanitation Management. With his notable experience in hospital housekeeping, he already compliments the work of his staff. He feels fortunate that Mrs. Hilda T. Peacock, our former executive housekeeper has not retired as originally planned, but is serving an important function as Supervisor of Housekeeping at One Ten Francis Street.

He and his wife, Barbara, live in Dedham with their four children.

A harried crew works on the billing system for Medicare. From left to right: Mr. Frank Wright, Computer Programmer, Mr. David F. Lilley, Systems Analyst Trainee, and Mrs. Priscilla Tinkham, Systems Analyst. Mr. Robert Franzosa, Programmer Trainee helps in the background.

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turned out like a miracle," Priscilla said.

At the end of the first day of Medicare there were 73 eligible patients in the Hospital all having different laboratory tests, medications and therapy. The computer was already storing this information, preparing to spill it out in the correct format, which a Patient Service representative could copy on the government form for Part A. Eventually, Deaconess hopes to gain approval for the computer to print the information directly on the form as it does for Part B.

At a final meeting the last day before Medicare went into effect, Mr. Richard E. Lee said, "It is obvious that we are well-prepared and ready to swing our program into action. We can see that our tremendous effort has been time well spent. Clerical costs alone for the next year have been reduced by an estimated $23,000."

RECERTIFICATION AND UTILIZATION

Aside from billing for Medicare, the Hospital has to remind its staff doctors when to certify and recertify their patients. In order to receive Medicare benefits, the doctor must certify that the patient needs to be hospitalized. Certification is required on the day of admission, recertification is necessary in 14 days, again on the 21st day and then at intervals determined by the Utilization Review Committee of the Medical Staff. Patient Service flags the charts of eligible patients for the doctors' certification. Mr. John F. Slayton, Night Administrator and Mr. Peter Campisano, Service Coordinator, are responsible for the follow up. The computer notifies Mr. Slayton and Mr. Campisano when recertification is due.

The Utilization Review Committee of the Medical Staff, which has been functioning for about two years to insure that all in-patient service is necessary, has become more prominent since the advent of Medicare. Its role of achieving the maximum effective utilization of hospital services now includes reviewing the records of all Medicare patients who have been hospitalized for thirty consecutive days. It may request the attending staff physician to provide further information concerning the patient's need for continued hospitalization. Dr. Elmer C. Bartels is Chairman of the committee, which is comprised of five other staff doctors, Dr. Frank P. Foster, Dr. Joseph E. Mackie, Dr. Howard F. Root, Dr. Neil W. Swinton, Sr. and Dr. Frank C. Wheelock as well as two members from Administration, Miss E. Louise Seymour, Director of Medical Record Department, and Mr. Hubert D. Sycamore, Administrative Assistant.

Current projections suggest that every department in every hospital eventually will be affected by Medicare. New England Deaconess Hospital has already begun to adapt to the new era. The immediate reaction may have appeared slight, but effect is not always an apparent thing. Everything did go smoothly on July 1, but many people had spent many hours so that our tradition of the best in patient care could continue.

SUGGESTION AWARDS

The Suggestion Committee has made two awards this month. An award goes to Mr. Leroy Cropper, Housekeeping, for a suggestion to improve employee safety and to Mr. Raymond Dix, Administration, for a suggestion regarding office communication.

NEW RESIDENTS WELCOMED AT DINNER

Residents attending the welcoming dinner are from left to right (front row): Dr. Adi Gazdar, Dr. Eric Weber, Dr. Francis Breen, Jr., Dr. Joseph Dotolo, Dr. John Hare, Dr. Nadia Malouf, Dr. Homa Safaii, Dr. Ahmed Mohiuddin, Dr. Rafael Zelaya, Dr. Volkmar E. Wiebe, Dr. Patricia Donohoe, Dr. Fouad Hamawy and Dr. Eduardo Zorrilla; (back row): Dr. Ezatollah Foroughi, Dr. Francis Savarirayan, Dr. Elisabeth Holzen, Dr. Emyr Jones, Dr. W. Gilbert Eberle Dr. Blaise Gentile, Dr. Harley Meia, Dr. John Bookwalter, Dr. William Schneider, Dr. Klaus Anselm, Dr. Ulrich Ehrig, Dr. Robert P. Rood, Dr. Khaja Naziruddin, Dr. Chikao Hori, Dr. Gregory Brondos, Dr. Victor Lawoyin, Dr. Carl Konvolinka, Dr. Jean Carter, Dr. Barry Zitomer, Dr. Aldo T. Paz and Dr. Thomas Ryan.

The 37 new residents, fellows or trainees, who began their orientation to Deaconess on July 1 are either specializing in Internal Medicine or Hematology under Dr. James L. Tullis, Anesthesiology under Dr. Francis J. Audin, Diabetes at Joslin Clinic under Dr. Howard F. Root, Anatomic Pathology under Dr. William A. Meissner, Clinical Pathology under Dr. Bradley E. Copeland, Radiology under Dr. Joseph H. Marks, Thoracic Surgery under Dr. Francis M. Woods or Surgery under Dr. Cornelius E. Sedgwick.

A welcoming dinner was held at 1200 Beacon Street at 6:30, Tuesday evening, July 5. Dr. Tullis, Chairman of the Residency Selection and Training Committee, Dr. David I. Rutledge, Chairman of the Lahey Residency Program and Dr. Howard F. Root, Medical Director of the Joslin Clinic, extended greeting to all residents, fellows, trainees and their wives. The main speaker was Dr. Roger C. Graves, Chairman of the Residency Advisory Committee, who stressed honor and integrity in the medical profession — and described New England Deaconess as a friendly hospital where the patient always comes first.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY MRS. HOBART

Deaconess has a friend who celebrated her 100th birthday on June 16. Although she has no official connection with the Hospital, Mrs. Harriet C. Hobart never leaves her threshold at the Frederika Nursing Home on Deaconess Road without first visiting our Chapel.

MRS. HARRIET C. HOBART

Mrs. Hobart certainly does not appear to have had a century of living. She still makes her own clothes including hats, paints beautifully, designs her own Christmas cards and walks everywhere. The secret is to drink the juice of a half a lemon in hot water before breakfast every day for 56 years.

MRS. RICHARDSON RETIRES

Mrs. Mary J. Richardson, a switchboard operator since 1953, retired on Friday, July 8. A party, kept small by her request, was held in the telephone operator's lounge. She received a money fan from her co-workers and a corsage and emerald ring from the Hospital. Miss Ellen Adams, Assistant Director, and Miss Marjorie M. LeBeau, Director of Administrative Services, attended.

NEW LIBRARY BOOKS

There are six new nonfiction books in the Patients' and Employees' Library — A. E. Hotchner's *"Papa Hemingway,"* the Pulitzer Prize winner's biography; *"African Odyssey"* by John L. Brom, which tells of the author's travels through Africa; *"General John Glover and his Marblehead Mariners"* by George Athan Billias, the story of the Revolutionary War general whose fighting fishermen ferried Washington across the Delaware; *"Land to the West"* by Geoffrey Ashe, presentations of the theory that there were Irish and other pre-Viking discoverers of America; *"Churchill: The Man of the Century"* by Neil Ferrier and *"Sir Winston Churchill: A Memorial"* by Frederick Towers, two pictorial biographies of the late English statesman.

New fiction selections include *"Hall of Mirrors" by* John Rowan Wilson, a novel set in Britain involving a libel suit within the medical profession and the two mysteries, *"The Widowmaker"* by M. Fagyas and *"The Mood for Murder"* by Van Siller.

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